How We Misread Renée's Face. Renée Zellweger.

Julia Baird OCT. 28, 2014. From: The International Herald Tribune. The Opinion Pages

Some physical flaws are apparent from birth. Others are pointed out to you.

§1. I never realized that I had a reasonably big nose, for example, until someone made a joke about it at a dinner. A short time later, a newspaper artist who specialized in caricatures was asked to draw a cartoon of me to run with my columns. In it, my nose curved so far around my cheek that it almost tickled my ear. I can still remember the roaring laughter of my editor when she saw it. When the artist asked me what I made of my likeness, I stared at the floor and mumbled. He said, “I really like doing people I work with, as I can capture them so well.” There was a pause before he added: “You don’t need to have plastic surgery or anything.” Oh.

§2. When Renée Zellweger made an appearance last week at a Hollywood awards ceremony that sparked speculation over whether the actress had undergone cosmetic surgery, her face was subjected to ridiculously overblown, deeply unfair and brutally sexist scrutiny. But surely, as that picking apart demonstrated, it’s not surgery that is the problem for the famous faces we gaze upon now, but sameness: the centripetal force of sameness that sucks in all “irregularities,” all signs of distinctiveness, in exchange for wide eyes, plump cheeks, ice-smooth foreheads and full breasts.

§3. Perhaps it is time for all of us to trumpet — or at least not try to mask — our imperfections. The magnificent Eleanor Roosevelt had buck teeth. The brilliant Jane Addams thought she had a “lumpy” nose. Frida Kahlo had a monobrow and a mustache. Dorothea Lange had a limp. Julia Child was 6-foot-2. Janis Joplin was a stranger to hair products. The writer Daphne Merkin described the fabulously stylish doyenne of postwar fashion Diana Vreeland as having the “face of a gargoyles.”

§4. Then there are the monarchs. Catherine the Great looked — as recently claimed — like Britain’s prime minister, David Cameron, in a white wig, yet her perceived plainness did not prevent her from procuring a line of youthful lovers. Queen Victoria refused to wear a corset and, by the end of her life, had a 52-inch waist. And what of the famed Egyptian seductress Cleopatra? The French scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote that if her hooked nose had been shorter, “the whole face of the world would have been changed.”

§5. The predicament, then, for women is increasingly not ugliness, but uniformity. And the problem should not be age, but erasure of character. It seems trite, or retro, to remind ourselves that beauty is warmth, conversation, intelligence and a certain grace or magnetism, too, but it’s true.

1.a Read the text carefully and paraphrase paragraphs 1 to 2 in your own words explaining the most important ideas in the text. (max 300 words)

1.b Describe the register of the text and the discourse strategies the author uses to persuade the reader of his or her opinion. (max 200 words)

1.c Comment on the repetition of grammatical structures in paragraphs 3 and 4. (max 200 words)

1.d Explain what the author means by the “centripetal force of sameness” in paragraph 2. (max 150 words)
William Shakespeare  
Sonnet 23

1. As an unperfect actor on the stage,
2. Who with his fear is put besides his part;
3. Or some fierce thing, replete with too much rage,
4. Whose strength’s abundance weakens his own heart;
5. So I, for fear of trust, forget to say
6. The perfect ceremony of love’s rite,
7. And in mine own love’s strength seem to decay,
8. O’ercharged with burden of mine own love’s might:
9. O let my books be then the eloquence
10. And dumb presagers of my speaking breast,
11. Who plead for love and look for recompense,
12. More than that tongue that more hath more expressed:
   13. O learn to read what silent love hath writ!
   14. To hear with eyes belongs to love’s fine wit.

2.a Place the poem in its literary and historical context. (max 250 words)

2.b Discuss Shakespeare’s use of prosody, rhythm and rhyme in the sonnet. (max 200 words)

2.c What use does Shakespeare make of the stage trope? (max 200 words)

2.d What relationship does the sonnet set up between the poet’s “speaking breast” (l. 10) and his “books” (l. 9)? (max 150 words)
Global warming has doubled risk of harsh winters in Eurasia, research finds

**Damian Carrington, The Guardian, Sunday 26 October 2014**

*New research shows that the increased risk of icy winters will persist for the next few decades.*

§1. The risk of severe winters in Europe and northern Asia has been doubled by global warming, according to new research. The counter-intuitive finding is the result of climate change melting the Arctic ice cap and causing new wind patterns that push freezing air and snow southwards.

§2. Severe winters over the last decade have been associated with those years in which the melting of Arctic sea ice was greatest. But the new work is the most comprehensive computer modelling study to date and indicates the frozen winters are being caused by climate change, not simply by natural variations in weather. “The origin of frequent Eurasian severe winters is global warming,” said Prof Masato Mori, at the University of Tokyo, who led the new research. Climate change is heating the Arctic much faster than lower latitudes and the discovery that the chances of severe winters has already doubled shows that the impacts of global warming are not only a future threat. Melting Arctic ice has also been implicated in recent wet summers in the UK. The new research, published in *Nature Geoscience*, shows that the increased risk of icy winters will persist for the next few decades. But beyond that continued global warming overwhelms the colder winter weather. The Arctic is expected to be ice-free in late summer by the 2030s, halting the changes to wind patterns, while climate change will continue to increase average temperatures.

§3. Dr Colin Summerhayes, at the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, UK, said: “This counterintuitive effect of the global warming that led to the sea ice decline in the first place makes some people think that global warming has stopped. It has not. Although average surface warming has been slower since 2000, the Arctic has gone on warming rapidly throughout this time.”

The melting of sea ice influences Eurasian winters because the open ocean is darker than ice and absorbs more heat. This in turn warms the air above and weakens the high-level winds called the polar vortex. This causes meanders in the jet stream to become stuck in place. This “blocking” pattern pulls freezing air southwards out of the Arctic and, because it is stuck, the resulting severe weather can last for long periods.

§4. Climate scientists have warned for many years that global warming is not simply leading to a slow, gradual rise in temperature. Instead, it is putting more energy into the climate system which drives more frequent extreme events. Deadly heatwaves in Europe and Australia have already been shown to be many times more likely because of global warming, while some floods were made twice as likely by climate change as long ago as 2000. “Annual average global temperatures continue to rise, but the distribution of temperature through the year is giving us more extremes, which is highly damaging to food production,” said Prof Peter Wadhams at the University of Cambridge. “As ice continues to retreat, we can expect these weather extremes to continue to occur and maybe worsen.”

1.a Read the text carefully and paraphrase paragraphs 1 to 2 in your own words explaining the most important ideas in the text. (max 300 words)

1.b Describe the register of the text and the discourse strategies the author uses to persuade the reader of his or her opinion. (max 200 words)

1.c According to the author, research has demonstrated that global warming has increased the risk of severe winters in certain parts of the world. Why is this ‘counter-intuitive’? (Par 1) (max 200 words)

1.d The frequent severe winters has led some people to believe that global warming has stopped. Why is this not the case? (Par 3) (max 150 words)
William Blake, "London" (1794)

I wander thro’ each charter’d street,
Near where the charter’d Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

In every cry of every Man, 5
In every Infants cry of fear,
In every voice: in every ban,
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear

How the Chimney-sweepers cry
Every blackning Church appalls,
And the hapless Soldiers sigh
Runs in blood down Palace walls

But most thro’ midnight streets I hear
How the youthful Harlots curse
Blasts the new-born Infants tear 15
And blights with plagues the Marriage hearse

2.a Place the poem in its literary and historical context, possibly including other literary texts of the period on London. (max. 250 words)
2.b How do you interpret the “mind-forg’d manacles” in line 8, possibly with reference to Blake’s poetics and to Romantic aesthetics in general? (max. 200 words)
2.c “London” has been read as a social protest. Can you find in the text any support for this interpretation? (max. 200 words)
2.d What is the function of the rhetorical device of anaphora in lines 5-7 and in general of the repetition of sounds and words in the poem? (max. 150 words)
Why are so few WWI heroines remembered? Changing Faces of Heroism
www.bbc.com Viewpoint 27th October 2014
She-soldiers fought alongside men and challenged social expectations

§1. World War One created new kinds of heroes and heroines. The main route to heroism for men was through the bearing of arms. Following the mass mobilisation of civilians into the armed forces, military heroism became more democratized, as any man donning a uniform could potentially be seen as a hero. Medics, skilled male auxiliaries and members of the labour corps were sometimes seen as heroic, but it was front-line soldiers who were placed at the top of the hierarchy of male heroism.

§2. The shift in the ways that heroism was understood, and the advent of "total war" in which a large percentage of the population were actively engaged in the war effort, meant that women could be seen as heroic, too. [...] Their heroism was sometimes related to the ways they carried out their pre-war roles in exceptionally difficult circumstances - nurses caring for the wounded on trains, ships and hospitals, or bereaved mothers and wives stoically coping with their losses, workers taking on jobs normally reserved for men, and housewives coping with the privations of war. They were all perceived, in different ways, to demonstrate heroic qualities of bravery, endurance and selflessness.

§3. But other women, especially those close to the front lines, took on roles that challenged social expectations about the roles and duties of men and women. Some took up arms, becoming 'she-soldiers'. The name was given in previous centuries to women who dressed up as men in military uniforms and who were popular characters in ballads and folktales. The best-known British 'she-soldier' is Flora Sandes.

§4. Women at home who took on jobs normally reserved for men were often hailed as heroines. During WW1 some female fighters were claimed as war heroines and were photographed and praised in newspapers, but their heroism was not always remembered in such a positive light once the guns had fallen silent. When war broke out, these women were keen to prove their worth and join the Armed Services. In Britain, members of the Women's Volunteer Reserve, founded in 1914 by wealthy suffragette Evelina Haverfield, adopted army ranks, dressed in khaki and practised their drills in central London - to the scorn of some journalists.[...]

§5. Later in the war, resistance networks in occupied France and Belgium sought to undermine and disobey the martial laws of the German occupiers. As was to be the case in the World War Two, occupation blurred the line between combatant and non-combatant and resistance networks involved both sexes.

1.a Read the text carefully and paraphrase paragraphs 1 to 2 in your own words explaining the most important ideas in the text. (Max 300 words)
1.b Describe the register of the text and the discourse strategies the author uses to persuade the reader of his or her opinion. (max 200 words)
1.c Was the heroism of women always seen in a positive light? (Par 4) (max 200 words)
1.d In what way were the ‘lines blurred’ during WWI and WWII? (Par 5) (max 150 words)
James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1914) (extract)

§1 She was fast asleep. Gabriel, leaning on his elbow, looked for a few moments unresentfully on her tangled hair and half-open mouth, listening to her deep-drawn breath. So she had had that romance in her life: a man had died for her sake. It hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. He watched her while she slept as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife. His curious eyes rested long upon her face and on her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange friendly pity for her entered his soul. He did not like to say even to himself that her face was no longer beautiful but he knew that it was no longer the face for which Michael Furey had braved death.

§2 Perhaps she had not told him all the story. His eyes moved to the chair over which she had thrown some of her clothes. A petticoat string dangled to the floor. One boot stood upright, its limp upper fallen down: the fellow of it lay upon its side. He wondered at his riot of emotions of an hour before. From what had it proceeded? From his aunt's supper, from his own foolish speech, from the wine and dancing, the merry-making when saying good-night in the hall, the pleasure of the walk along the river in the snow. [...] 

§3 The air of the room chilled his shoulders. He stretched himself cautiously along under the sheets and lay down beside his wife. One by one they were all becoming shades. Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age. He thought of how she who lay beside him had locked in her heart for so many years that image of her lover's eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live.

§4 Generous tears filled Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey im palpable world: the solid world itself which these dead had one time reared and lived in was dissolving and dwindling.

§5 A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely church-yard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

2.a Place the text in its literary and historical context, possibly including references to other literary texts of the same period. (max 250 words)

2.b Discuss the narrative and symbolic content of the extract, including the changes in the relations between the characters mentioned (max 200 words)

2.c Provide a stylistic analysis of the extract, specifying its literary genre, what its main formal characteristics are, paying particular attention to the narrative techniques used. (max 200 words)

2.d “The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree.” (§.4): Explain this sentence in its context? (max 150 words)